

HPS puts out annual survey

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Public School district is administering our annual survey for families, students and staff using the Panorama Culture and Climate Survey. The survey information will inform our improvement efforts at the school and district level, as we work together to be families’ first choice for their children’s education. The 2021 survey window is Feb. 22 to Mar. 12. Before March 12, we ask that parents and guardians take 2 minutes to complete a survey for each school in which you have

See SURVEY, page 3

Morse selected administrator for Cape town

By Shelby Macri
smacri@turley.com

HOLYOKE – Mayor Alex Morse, who is not seeking re-election and is in the final year of his four-year term, was selected last Thursday night to become the new town administrator in Provincetown.

Morse beat out several other candidates and was the unanimous choice of the Select Board in Provincetown, a community on the very tip of Cape Cod. Morse will enter negotiations for a contract and possible housing allowance and is likely to leave office prior to the expiration of his term.

“The next step is to negotiate the contract,” Morse said Monday. “Once that is complete, I will know when I

officially start the new position, as well as when I plan to resign as mayor. I had already announced that I don’t intend to run for mayor again last December, and there are already multiple declared candidates to replace me. The opportunity in Provincetown is one that I did not want to pass up.”

Morse is resigning after nearly 10 years of being Mayor; and notes that of all the 44 Holyoke mayors, he is the fourth longest serving Mayor in the city’s history and he feels it’s good timing to switch gears.

Morse won’t let any-one question his commitment and dedication to his hometown, and that he’s been visiting Provincetown annually

for the last decade. He has been following the process in Provincetown for the last few months and feels that the position is the right opportunity at the right time.

On the switch from city life to small town living Morse said the mechanics of municipal government are similar while the communities are different. Each has it’s own challenges and opportunities, and he looks forward to listening to and learning from the community as well as working with various stakeholders to solve the challenges of the town.

As Morse has been visit-



Alex Morse

ing Provincetown two to three times a year; he has several friends who call the small town home and it’s a community he knows and loves.

“Provincetown is a beautiful coastal town, and has rich history, one that also includes being a refuse for members of the LGBTQ community,” Morse, Holyoke’s first openly gay mayor, said. While he does not know when he will be resigning, he stated he will not be staying in Holyoke to the end of the year. The city has various candidates for the soon to

See MORSE, page 8

Officials seek answers from retirement board after audit findings are released

An audit report released last month pointed to mismanagement of funds

By Dalton Zbierski
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AGAWAM – Municipalities throughout the county are preparing to take action against the

Hampden County Regional Board of Retirement after the release of a Feb. 21 audit that left more questions than answers and generated outrage over probable malfeasance and mismanagement of funds.

And towns including Hampden, which have had to pay

See ANSWERS, page 11

Wistriahurst announces next virtual program

HOLYOKE – On Wednesday, March 10 at 2 p.m. Wistriahurst will host Ancient, Seasonal, and Marketable: Food Fish of the Connecticut River, a live, virtual program presented by Elyse Moore. This program is free and open to all. Spaces are limited and pre-registration is required.

In this program, Elyse Moore will explore the nutritional importance of shad and other migratory, or anadromous, fish to the inland diet, the close cultural relation-

ship that developed between the fish and the people who lived along the Connecticut River. Participants will learn about the earliest native methods of harvesting fish, the Ancient Charter law of the Massachusetts Bay Colony that protected the fish populations as they ascended the river in their season, and the pop-up culture of riverside inns, taverns, rites, rituals, and recipes that grew up during the spring fish harvest before the permanent damming of the Great River.

This program is open to all members of the public, but has been specially designed to address the needs of area seniors, many of whom continue to be socially isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is supported through a Community Development Block Grant - COVID-19 Grant to address, prevent, and respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic that is administered through the Holyoke Office

See PROGRAM, page 2

Town administrator and President Biden share long history

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

HAMPDEN – On his first day at Archmere Academy in Claymont, Del., current Hampden Town Administrator

Robert Markel formed a friendship that would last a life time. Markel’s acquaintance was none other than Joseph Biden, who, six decades later, would become the 46th president of the United States.



Hampden Town Administrator Robert Markel and U.S. President Joseph Biden have remained close since meeting on the first day of high school more than 60 years ago. The photo above was taken at American International College's Model Congress during the 1970's, where Markel invited Biden to do the keynote speech.

Photo courtesy of Robert Markel

“The first day of class when we were freshmen, he sat next to me; he was the first person I met in high school,” Markel said.

The two students carved out a friendship that still exists today. As years have passed, Markel and Biden have consistently had each other’s backs, lending support through a myriad of campaigns while enjoying each other’s company outside of politics.

As a teenager, Biden “was a gregarious person – one of those fellas who got to know everyone and would talk to anybody everybody,” said Markel.

Markel recalls that Biden was extremely self-conscious about his stutter, a speech impairment that he spent countless hours working to overcome. Mean-spirited students called Biden “Stutter Head,” although the nickname largely disappeared by senior year.

In the process of improving his stutter, outgoing Biden made a name as a skillful football receiver and eventually became the junior and senior class president at Archmere, an all-boys Catholic school at the time.

Markel describes himself as the “Original ‘Ridin’ with Biden guy”: the future president’s first chauffeur. In Markel’s 1950’s Studebaker Lurk, the two friends discussed girls and sports; both students were big Phillies and Eagles fans. At the Biden residence in New Castle County, Del., many memories were made, Markel recalled.

“In my junior and senior years, I had access to a car and used to drive to school. Every day, I would pick [Biden] up at his house on Wilson Road and drop him off after school,” said Markel. “His house, in fact,

See TIES, page 5

We want to hear from you

REGION – Everyone uses different tools to get the news. At Turley Publications, we strive to reach all our readers. In that effort, we have created an online survey to learn about how our readers get their news. Please complete this survey to educate us on how we can best reach you, the reader. The 10-question survey takes about two minutes to complete online. The survey can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DBSJ69F>.

* 4. How often do you read a newspaper?

☐ Several times a week

☒ About once a week

☐ Several times a month

☐ About once a month

☐ Less than once a month

☐ Never

School community mourns death of senior

By **Shelby Macri**
smacri@turley.com

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Public Schools recently wrote a letter to the community to acknowledge and honor the death of High School Dean Campus Senior Markiyan Yuzych, who passed away on Feb. 28 due to a car accident.

Yuzych was a mechanically-inclined and passionate student who was on track for graduation later this year.

“We have a vacation academy during school breaks and you wouldn’t expect

a senior to show up, but he did,” Dean Campus Principal Alan Gates said. “Him showing up was a testament to his determination, and his work towards graduation. The three main things he was, was kind, dedicated, and resilient.”

After struggling during the unique academic year amid the pandemic, Yuzych showed up to school and worked hard to get back on track for graduation this year, Gates explained that Yuzych knew the importance of graduating not just for himself but for his family and parents as well. Yuzych showed up

during Feb. break, he was present and he kept up his motivation well after showing that he was ready and working for the finish line.

Interim Superintendent Anthony Soto mentioned that there will be grief counselors available to help students, parents, and school staff during this time.

“On behalf of the entire Holyoke Public School District, we offer our heartfelt condolences and special thoughts to Markiyan’s family, friends and loved ones at this most difficult time,” Soto said. “The death of Markiyan

is a terrible tragedy. Please let us know if we can help you and your family.”

Gates said that the Dean campus school is remembering Markiyan, with staff members and students writing messages to remember and honor him. Additionally, various students and staff members visited the site of the crash and laid flowers, pictures, and candles to honor Yuzych and remember the person he was. The school and community is banding together to share stories and messages of love and remembrance for Yuzych and his family.

Holyoke Mall announces re-opening of Billy Beez

HOLYOKE – In accordance with Governor Baker’s continued reopening and following the official Massachusetts Phase Three Step Two guidance, Holyoke Mall has welcomed Billy Beez back to the shopping center. Guests can visit “Operation Bee Safe” to learn what Billy Beez is doing to keep everyone safe. Billy Beez will be operating at the following modified hours:

Monday – closed
Tuesday through Friday – 11am-6pm*
Saturday & Sunday -11am-7pm*
*admission desk closes one hour

prior to store closing

For further information and to fill out their waiver prior to visiting, please visit their website <https://billybeezus.com/location/holyoke-mall/>.

“With safety as the highest priority at the shopping center, we are thrilled that we’ll also be able to provide guests a little fun with Billy Beez reopening their doors today,” said Bill Rogalski, General Manager for Holyoke Mall.

Mall hours of operation are Monday through Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Test scores waived in scholarship application

AGAWAM – Due to pandemic and the closing of national testing sites, many students have been unable to take college entrance exams. As a result, SAT and ACT scores are NOT required to apply for a Walter S. Barr Scholarship. Those students in college, as well as graduating seniors, are all encouraged to apply.

Completed Scholarship and Fellowship applications must be received either electronically or be mailed to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Ste. 2K, Westfield, MA 01085, no later than March 15. Applications are available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, on-line at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

Last year, The Horace Smith Fund awarded \$297,000 in the form of 21 Scholarships and 3 Fellowships to deserving students. All applicants must be residents of Hampden County and full-time students. Scholarships awards of \$12,000 are distributed as \$3,000 annually and renewable each year until graduation. Fellowship awards of \$15,000 are distributed as \$5,000 annually and renewable for two additional years. All recipients must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 each semester.

Recipients are selected on a variety of criteria, including merit, financial need, recommendations, and community involvement. Of greatest importance is the applicant’s personal written account of why they feel deserving of the award.

U.S. Attorney’s Office reminds public of CDC eviction moratorium order

BOSTON – As part of the federal response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the U.S. Attorney’s Office is reminding landlords of their obligations and tenants of their rights under the Centers for Disease Control’s Order temporarily halting residential evictions of tenants who meet certain income eligibility requirements and who are unable to pay their full rent due to substantial loss of household income, loss of compensable hours of work or wages, a lay-off, or extraordinary out-of-pocket medical expenses. The order prohibits landlords from evicting such tenants for non-payment of rent from Sept. 4, 2020 to March 31.

In Sept. 2020, the CDC issued a federal Order imposing a temporary halt in residential evictions to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. The order aims to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by enabling people who get sick or who are at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 to protect themselves and others by staying in one place to quarantine.

Under the CDC Order, tenants who meet income eligibility requirements (generally, those earning less than \$99,000 per year, or \$198,000 if filing jointly) and who are unable to pay their full rent due to substantial loss of household income, loss of compensable hours of work or wages, a lay-off, or extraor-

dinary out-of-pocket medical expenses can obtain protection from eviction by providing a sworn declaration regarding their situation to their landlord. Once this declaration is provided, a landlord is prohibited from evicting the tenant while the moratorium remains in effect, and is subject to substantial penalties, including fines of up to \$250,000 and up to a year in jail.

The order is not intended to prevent landlords from starting eviction proceedings, but rather to stop the actual eviction of a covered person for non-payment of rent. Moreover, the order does not affect the obligation of tenants to pay rent, nor does it bar the collection of fees, penalties, and interest.

For questions or reports of violations of the Order please email USAMA.CivilRights@usdoj.gov or call 617-275-8756 and leave a message. More information on the CDC Order is available here.

Federal resources are available through the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to assist landlords with mortgage relief here.

The Civil Rights Unit of the U.S. Attorney’s Office was established in 2015 with the mission of enhancing federal civil rights enforcement.

For more information on the office’s civil rights efforts, please visit www.justice.gov/usao-ma/civil-rights.



A mask donation was made to the Holyoke Public Schools last week courtesy of the Holyoke Rotary Club. Pictured are: Devin Sheehan, Christine Burns, Marc Swygert, Katie Buckley, Matt Dupont, Tom Drohan, Tom Accomando, and Brittney Kane.

Submitted photo

Rotary Club makes mask donation

HOLYOKE – On Monday, Feb. 22, the Holyoke Rotary Club (District 7980) joined Rotary International’s Million Mask Challenge by distributing 10,000 masks to HPS. President Katie Buckley, President Elect Tom Accomando, and Rotary Assistant District Governor Areas 2 and 3 Christine Burns (Donahue paraprofessional) gathered at Donahue School Monday afternoon to deliver the masks to Principal Marc Swygert, Assistant Principal Tom Drohan, School Committee Member Devin Sheehan, School Nurse Brittney Kane, RN, and

Operations Analyst Matt Dupont. The donation will be shared amongst all schools in the district to be used as an option for students and staff who need replacements during the day.

We are thrilled that our friends at the Holyoke Rotary Club have donated these masks to support us in our efforts to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students and staff. The Holyoke Rotary is an invaluable organization in our community and we are delighted to have them as partners - #TEAM - Together Everyone Achieves More.

PROGRAM, from page 1

of Community Development and has been planned in consultation with the Holyoke Council on Aging. Additional support has been provided through NEH CARES Act funding granted by Mass Humanities.

To register for Ancient, Seasonal,

and Marketable: Food Fish of the Connecticut River, please visit www.Wistariahurst.org or contact Eileen Maginnis at the Holyoke Council on Aging at maginnise@holyoke.org. If you have an idea for a topic you’d like to be considered for a future Wistariahurst session, please contact info@wistariahurst.org.

Dean applications due in early March

HOLYOKE – Students in 8th-grade and above can apply to join the HHS Dean campus community Applications are due Mar. 13. Once applications are received, interviews will be scheduled between now and Mar. 26. These will be facilitated between the Dean Campus and your child’s sending school. Spots

are limited. If you have any questions, read the Admissions Policy and contact Laurie Denis ldenis@hps.holyoke.ma.us or Alan Gates agates@hps.holyoke.ma.us at 413-534-2071/72. (All applications received after Mar. 13 will be reviewed and a campus representative will be in touch with more information).

Shoebox designs for parade due early next week

HOLYOKE — Miss the annual Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day Parade?

Wish there was a way to share your pride in the city’s annual celebration? Fear not.

All you need is a shoebox and your imagination. Then get ready to strut your stuff in the first-ever Holyoke St. Patrick’s Shoebox Parade Party.

The online event featuring videos of parade floats made out of shoeboxes will take place March 17th in celebration of Holyoke’s annual St. Patrick’s Day weekend festivities.

The inaugural event was recently launched by the Committee to Elect Rebecca Lisi, a mayoral candidate in Holyoke. The virtual Shoebox Parade will be a COVID-safe community event in celebration of St. Patrick’s Day in Holyoke, a city known throughout the region for its St. Patrick’s Day Parade and weekend festivities.

“The Holyoke community has suffered a great loss due to the cancellation of the St. Patrick’s Day Parade and all its corresponding events for two years now due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Lisi. “There’s no way that we could ever replace the Parade and all the festivities leading up to that weekend, but my Committee and I thought that we could create a small, virtual event that could

engage families and bring the community together.”

Crafting and displaying shoebox floats is a popular children’s event in communities like New Orleans that have a strong tradition of celebrating Mardi Gras. In 2020, cities across the country adopted shoebox float parades as a way to safely celebrate Thanksgiving and other holidays in light of the pandemic restrictions on gatherings. This year, Lisi and her Committee have created a Facebook Shoebox Parade Party event that will allow the Holyoke community to honor the decades long tradition of celebrating St. Patrick’s Day in the city while adapting and innovating the event to make it safe and accessible.

Community members are being asked to create and decorate shoebox floats that will become a part of a virtual photo party that will occur on the Committee’s Facebook Event Page throughout the month of March, with a video shoebox parade compilation airing on Wednesday, March 17 at 4 p.m. Photo and video submissions are due on Monday, March 8, submission details are outlined on the Parade Party Event Page on Facebook.

Once you have crafted your float, snap a photo and quick video to share your zany creation with us by Monday, March 8th to holyokeshoeboxparade@gmail.com so that we can share them with the world. In the end, we will compile a video of all of the floats to cre-

ate our own virtual parade that you can watch on our page on March 17th.

There will be prizes for different category winners including Greatest Holyoke Spirit, Best Dressed Float, Ultimate St. Paddy’s Day Float, Most Creative Float, and most social media engagements. There will also be a People’s Choice Award for the Shoebox Float with the most social media engagement, so make sure to like, comment, and share your work of genius with your family and friends!

“This is a wonderful way to bring the community together in a fun and safe way, especially since we aren’t able to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day in person as usual,” said Shannon Sarkisian, Associate Campaign Advisor and Volunteer Coordinator. “I can’t wait to see the creative things that people will come up with! As for myself, I’m going all out to attempt to make a shoebox that embodies our beloved Ashley Reservoir. My shoebox float might not even look good, but it’s guaranteed to be good fun for sure.”

Campaign committee member Jeff Trask said, “After being cooped up inside all winter in even ‘normal times,’ by March we are all looking forward to coming out of our homes for the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Since we are not able to come out to celebrate the Parade this year, this will be a little event to lift everyone’s spirits. I’m looking forward to participating with my little one and possibly starting a new family tradition.”

Lisi and her Committee launched the event today and has already generated a lot of enthusiastic support.

Rules and submission guidelines for St. Paddy’s Day Shoebox Parade Party:

Step 1 — Pick a theme:

This is your chance to create whatever you can dream! Be as innovative and collaborative as possible and use your imagination. You can pick any theme you want, but know that floats will be judged in the following categories:

- Greatest Holyoke Spirit
- Best Dressed Float
- Ultimate St. Paddy’s Day Float
- Most Creative Float

Step 2 - Gather your materials and create your shoebox float

Start with a shoebox or any similar shaped box as your base. Add clay, paint, markers, crayons, craft supplies, paper, feathers, sequins, flowers, seeds, toys, photos pretty much anything to bring your vision to life!

Step 3 – Snap a photo and video and submit them

- Video submissions are to be:
- No more than 15 seconds long
 - Filmed horizontally (cell phone videos are welcome!)
 - Of your float being pulled by a string from the right to the left of the screen (so it looks like it’s moving!)
 - Emailed to holyokeshoeboxparade@gmail.com no later than Monday, March 8th.

Submit the video and snapshot of your shoebox float via email along with your Name, Age, title of float, and a brief description of materials used. Include your Facebook profile name and/or URL, so that we can tag you when we post your float photo.

Float theme and video content must be family-friendly and the Committee reserves the right to determine the acceptability and appropriateness of all submissions.

Step 4: View photos of the floats on our page and vote for your favorite one

You will be able to see your submission along with the submissions of others on the event page.

The photo with the most social engagement (likes, comments, and shares) will win the grand prize.

Step 5 – Join us virtually in watching the parade party video

Gather your family, friends and neighbors and grab your front row seat in the comfort of your own home and watch our Shoebox Parade Party on our Facebook event page on March 17. Stay tuned for more updates.



Lottery to determine pre-K seats set for next month

By **Shelby Macri**
smacri@turley.com

HOLYOKE – The academic year will be coming to an end soon, and the Holyoke Public School district is getting ready for the next school year. The pre-kindergarten lottery applications for the 2021-22 school year are now being accepted with a deadline of Apr. 9 on a first come first serve basis.

There is a requirement of children being three years old on or before Sept. 1, additionally they have to be Holyoke residents. If a students third birthday is after Sept. 1 or during the remainder of the school year, families can call the Enrollment Center to see if there are open spots available later in the year. When there is an open spot the Enrollment Center will contact families, their children may be in a different zone than the one they reside in.

The Enrollment Center Manager Rebecca Lamb said the lottery allows the center to ask families what program they want and in which zone, while those who don’t receive a lottery spot will say the type of program they want but they can’t pick the zone.

“We’re placing students so that they’re three years old by the time they start school,” Lamb said. “We want to make sure they get the appropriate amount of schooling on time, but there are many different zones and we can’t guarantee that all students will be in the same zone they live in.”

Lamb further said that only Morgan school is offering full day classes where the other schools offer half days. The HPS is offering free preschool at Donahue, E.N. White, Kelly, McMahon, Metcalf, Sullivan, and Morgan; as well as Valley Opportunity Council operated Pre-K. The pre-k offered at VOC has it’s own

requirements for students and families, while they have a partnership with HPS families should call VOC independently for more information and 413-552-1559 extension 329.

The HPS has held this lottery for three years as they received the Commonwealth Pre-K Partnership Initiative grant, while they are holding it for next year there is no guarantee that it will be held again next year. There are half days in most of the schools, consisting of two and a half hour days offered in the morning and evening though the times these programs are held varies depending on the school. While the Enrollment Center is busy yearlong with enrolling students, they focus on students who have an IEP and need special classes first.

“We need to have spaces for the special education classes, and we have more spaces in the beginning,” Lamb said. “We

fill spaces as soon as they open, zones will fill but spaces don’t as we always find room throughout the year.”

She explained that she and the Director of Early Childhood Learning Patty Chavez, have found the lottery program to be a good system that seems to work for the families and the school. It works for those moving into the community, those moving out, students who turn three during the academic year, and more. They hope to continue this process as it has benefitted them the past three years.

Chavez said that families call call the central office for an extension to the Enrollment Center in order to sign their kids up for pre-k, whether it’s for the lottery or during the school year. Also families can find more information on the district’s website, as it’s connected to all the schools. To apply for the lottery people can visit enrollholyoke.com or call 413-534-2000.

SURVEY, from page 1

a child attending. The survey was sent to families via text and email on Feb. 22

Students will also be completing a survey. They will receive instructions from their teachers on how to access the survey which will be administered during the school day.

All staff will receive an email directly from Panorama Education on Feb. 22 requesting feedback.

Panorama surveys measure the culture and climate of our district and we need your input to continue to strengthen our school and district improvement efforts. Please complete the surveys by Mar. 12.

NOTICE

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Editorial

Here’s a return to normalcy: It’s tax time!

February is drawing to a close and that means it’s time to turn the page to no one’s favorite subject – taxes.

Some well-organized residents no doubt have already filed their federal and state returns in time for the first day of processing, which was about two weeks ago. The rest of us have until April 15. Take note of that date, because unless the U.S. Treasury Department or Mass. Dept. of Revenue make an unexpected change, the extended July deadline offered last year because of the pandemic is no longer an option.

Hey, we’ve all been wishing for a return to normalcy, right? Maybe not exactly what you had in mind, but it might make you feel better to consider this a step in the direction of life in a post-pandemic world.

Whether you prepare your returns yourself, pay an accountant or other professional, or have a friend or relative handle your tax filing, here are a few tips that could make this annual rite a little easier and perhaps help save you money:

First and foremost, get organized. Dust off your copy of last year’s return. If you don’t have it and can’t get a copy from your preparer, you can order it from the IRS. If you used one of the many online tax prep software programs, it’s likely archived there.

Gather all of your tax-related documents such as W-2s, 1099s, and other forms you need to prove the income you earned, including Social Security, pension payments, and unemployment benefits, and any withholding you selected (give yourself a pat on the back if you had taxes withheld from the latter two because chances are you’ll get a bigger refund).

If you received federal stimulus payments (either one or both issued in 2020), the good news is they are not counted as taxable income. However, if you received less than the full amount in either or both of the two rounds of stimulus, that could impact your 2020 return, so you’ll want to be able to reference that information.

Did you keep all your receipts for charitable contributions, work expenses eligible for

See TAX, page 5

Poetry Croner

Get Rid of Destroyed Childhood

By Thomas J. Kennedy

*The greatest injustice
Cheating a child out of their childhood.
As a child we played all day...
Made our rules, no adults, no uniforms
Shared our love
And everyone played.*

*Fabulous fifties indeed –
We had natural area, gone today
Easily get two teams – kids to play –
We had five large fields before getting
to Mackenzie Stadium.*

*Today – all those play areas and woods gone.
Parents on the porches and blankets were
overseers.
For little – little ones...
We all had moms and dads, strong families
And on weekends built fires near the trees
For our marshmallow enjoyment.*

*Firelight faces reflecting in happiness darkness
to light up by stars.
God bring these experience to today’s children.
Get them a mom. Dad, great schools, church
Worship and beyond religious caring.
And love to you... And love to you...*

*Children our greatest resources and they deserve
Your Peace, Love and Joy.
So thy will be committed to goodness, love,
Purpose and meaning adults
Now – full filled, miracles happen.*



Guest Column

Should I put in for Social Security now, or at 70?

By Russell Gloor

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Dear Rusty: I’m currently 67-years-old and still working full time. I took a big financial hit in 2008, which is why I’m still working, and I expect to continue working until I’m 70. My question is: should I take Social Security now, bank it until I’m 70, and then pay it out to myself upon retirement? Or would it be better to hold off until I’m 70 to claim? Longevity of about 85 seems to run in my family. Signed: Working Senior

Dear Working Senior: I’m afraid there’s no simple answer to your question, but I’ll give you some points to ponder.

If you don’t need the money right now, and you expect to enjoy at least average longevity (about 85 for a man your current age), then waiting until you’re 70 will give you the maximum monthly benefit and the most in cumulative lifetime Social Security benefits if you meet average longevity. And if you live beyond the average, your cumulative lifetime benefits will be correspondingly more. Since you’ve already delayed past your full retirement age of 66, you are already earning delayed retirement credits (DRCs) at the rate of 8% for each full year you delay (the maximum Social Security benefit is reached at age 70).

Can you do better than an 8% annual increase by claiming now and saving or

investing the money? That would be the main point to evaluate, and only you know your investment options. But you should also consider that if you should die before your wife and she has reached her full retirement age, your wife will get 100% of the benefit you are receiving at your death. If you claim earlier (e.g., now), your wife will get that earlier smaller amount as your widow. Compare that to what she’ll get by you waiting until age 70 to claim, when your benefit will be about 24% more than it is now. Again, something for you to consider.

If you claim at age 70 you will have collected about the same amount of money at age 82 as if you had claimed now. That is your “breakeven” point, which is where your expected longevity comes into play. If you think you will beat the average and you do, you’ll collect much more in total lifetime Social Security benefits by waiting until you are 70 to claim. Of course, no one knows how long they will live, but if your family history suggests a long life and you’re in good health now, delaying is usually a prudent choice. That is, however, a decision only you can make.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opin-

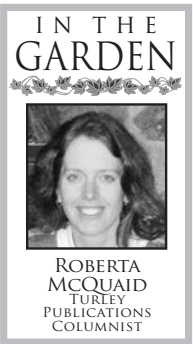
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Guest Column

Taking on your houseplant questions

Elise, who enjoys reading the column from Brookfield, posed this question to the Garden Lady: “I have a number of scented geraniums in my sunroom that I dug up from my herb garden last summer. They were looking good for awhile, but within the last month their leaves have begun to turn brown. It seems to start with the older foliage, beginning with the leaf margins and working its way in. I keep picking off the bad leaves but more follow suit. Do you have any suggestions as to how I should remedy this?”

Scented geraniums were among the first herbs I ever grew! In fact, at 18 I had a windowsill of them in my bedroom. I loved how they would emit a heavenly fragrance whenever the leaves were rubbed between my thumb and forefinger. Scents like lemon, nutmeg, coconut and rose. Fast forward a few decades and I am blessed with a collection of scented geraniums in the greenhouse at Old Sturbridge Village! Although they looked great a couple of weeks ago, they too have started to show some brown leaves, exactly in the manner you explain.



My first thought is in regards to watering. You see, geraniums can be finicky when it comes to moisture. If you let them get too dry their leaves will brown; too wet and the same thing happens. Sometimes looking at the soil and watering if it “looks” dry isn’t the best thing to do, and honestly, in my haste, that is what I have been doing lately. I am going back to the “finger test” and only water when the soil is dry to the touch, a few inches into the pot; maybe that will help.

Another point of interest is in regards to chlorinated water. There is some research that indicates geraniums are sensitive to chlorine. If your tap water is heavily chlorinated I would recommend that you fill a watering can with water and let it sit for 24 hours. The chlorine will dissipate before watering. Likewise, you can also run tap water through a charcoal type water filter to rid it of chlorine.

Lastly, our geraniums may be hungry. Beginning in late February and early

See GARDEN, page 5



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A Quote

OF NOTE

“You can cut
all the flowers
but you cannot
keep Spring
from coming.”

Pablo Neruda

Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to thesun@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to The Sun, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

TIES from page 1

became a bit of a hangout for seven or eight of us, who were close friends. We’d stay most of the afternoon, and I’d go home for dinner only after hanging out at Joe’s house for a couple hours.”

Biden’s appetite for politics was apparent at an early age. When Biden came up empty-handed in a bid to become Class President at Archmere, his failed attempt carried significant weight.

“I know it affected him a lot. He was really unhappy senior year when he lost that election to a very close friend of mine and his, Dave Walsh,” said Markel. “I noticed that this was a lot more important to him than, perhaps, it would have been for another high school kid.”

Biden’s ambition was only strengthened in the aftermath of being defeated by a peer. Markel said that Biden took heavily after his mother Catherine, a kindhearted woman, who would often offer the boys dating advice and encourage Biden’s political aspirations.

“We used to sit there in the afternoons, sometimes, and we’d talk to her, and she’d give us advice on what we were doing wrong and why our girlfriends didn’t like us or were angry with us, stuff like that,” Markel said.

One afternoon in the Biden basement, a political conversation ensued. As Biden’s classmates inquired as to why he was so invested in the topic, a friend by the name of Charles Del Campo intervened.

“Charlie, who now lives in Los

Angeles, said, ‘Joe wants to be President; can’t you understand?,’” Markell recalled. “We looked over at Joe. He didn’t say, ‘yes,’ or, ‘no,’ but he had a little bit of a smile on his face. You can tell by his eyes that clearly that’s something he had been thinking about and something he wanted to do.”

After graduating from Archmere in 1961, Biden studied at the University of Delaware, graduating in 1965 before earning his law degree from Syracuse University in 1968. Markel then graduated from the University of Notre Dame.

It didn’t take either man long to enter the political field. Biden was first elected to the New Castle County Council in 1970 and started his own law practice soon after. Markel, a political science professor at American International College in Springfield for 20 years, served seven terms as a Springfield City Councilor.

In 1972, Biden was elected as a U.S. Senator at the age of 29. Markel was highly impressed by Biden’s upset victory.

“[Biden] was the highest ranked Democrat in Delaware so when it came time to nominate someone to run for the U.S. Senate, he was the obvious choice, and he won in 1972 by a rather thin margin. He beat Rep. Senator [Caleb] Boggs in a very Republican state. Clearly, he was on his way,” said Markel.

Biden ran unsuccessfully for U.S. President in both 1988 and 2008 but remained in the U.S. Senate from 1973 until 2009, when he became Vice President under President Barack Obama.

Despite his national success, Biden remained close to Markel, aiding him in his successful campaign to become Springfield Mayor in 1992.

“He was very helpful to me when I ran for mayor, as well as when I ran for city council, raising money, coming to Springfield. And when I ran for mayor, he came up twice. He did a fundraiser for me in Springfield and did one in Boston to help me with the campaign. That’s who he is. He’s loyal to his friends; never asked me for anything in return,” said Markel.

Outside of the political realm, Biden and Markel have maintained a healthy friendship for decades. Before Biden entered the White House, Markel said that the two would meet in Delaware five to six times each year, since Markel’s parents lived in nearby Philadelphia.

“Whenever I’d be down there, we’d get together, talk and go out and do stuff,” said Markel. “One of the things we always did, the morning of Thanksgiving, I’d always be there, and some of the old classmates would meet in a park in Wilmington and play touch football on Thanksgiving morning until we got too old and fat to do it. We used to call it the ‘Toilet Bowl.’”

Last year, Markel aspired to become a delegate for the Democratic National Convention. After contacting Biden’s office, Markel was given a more prominent role as a member of the Massachusetts delegation to the Electoral College.

The title allowed Markel to officially file a ballot for Biden to become presi-

dent; of 11 individuals, Markel was the only Massachusetts elector who was personally endorsed by Biden.

On Dec. 14, 2020, Markel entered the House Chamber in the U.S. Capital building to cast the ballot for Biden. The experience was nearly beyond belief.

“I almost pinched myself saying, ‘Is this really happening? Is this guy who I used to hang out with and have known all my life really becoming the President of the United States?’ There’s a certain surreal quality to that, but Joe is a striver. He doesn’t give up,” said Markel.

So far, Markel said he approves of the job Biden has done in the Oval Office. Markel is confident that Biden will avoid the “angry tweeting at nighttime, personal attacks and so forth that was all part of the Trump era.”

Upon becoming president, Biden’s phone number changed and his security increased immensely. To contact his longtime friend, Markel now must communicate through Biden’s sister Valerie, who Markel has also known since high school; the two even went on a New Year’s Eve date in Center City Philadelphia more than a half century ago.

When all is said and done, regardless of policies or political ratings, Biden and Markel will remain good friends. In the meantime, Markel is enjoying his friend’s tremendous success.

“To have a member of my high school class[become president], it’s just amazing and astonishing. Plus, I think he’s doing a good job at this point,” Markel said.

TAX, from page 4

deductions, and the miles you logged on your vehicle for work? If yes, give yourself another pat on the back. If not, you might want to invest some time in getting that together. Documentation of student loan interest paid last year and any debt that was charged off translate into credits and liabilities, too, so you’ll want that at your fingertips.

This is just a starter list. To get a comprehensive checklist of everything you’ll need to be ready for tax return preparation, go to irs.gov or contact your tax prep professional.

We have a resource for you that many might be surprised to learn about — AARP. Did you know the AARP TaxAide program provides IRS-trained volunteers to prepare returns for anyone who asks? Free of charge. This is NOT limited to AARP members or even seniors in general. Taxpayers of any age can use this valuable service. They even handle returns for eligible small busi-

nesses. The only limitation is this program is intended for those in the middle-income bracket and lower. There is an income ceiling and those who exceed it are not likely eligible for the service.

For everyone else, it’s a well-regarded service that includes e-filing (which you want; It means faster processing and less time to get a refund if you’re due one). AARP suspended this program just about a year ago in response to the pandemic because the service was provided in-person at libraries, senior centers and other public facilities. Since then, they have had time to plan and adjust and AARP TaxAide now offers drop-off and virtual service using secure servers that protect your Social Security number and other vital personal information.

There are some in-person appointments, but none in our immediate area. For all the information about that program, go to taxaide.aarpfoundation.org.

So, are you ready to “render unto Caesar?” If not, make it a priority. April 15 will be here before you know it.

GARDEN, from page 4

March, scented geraniums begin to initiate flower buds and require additional nutrients to do so. I’ll start feeding with a liquid fertilizer at half strength every two weeks or so to support that need. Hopefully by adopting some of this advice your geraniums will begin to look a bit happier and mine will too!

Frances has a beautiful potted cyclamen and is curious how this particular plant is propagated. “My mother always comments about the beauty of my pink cyclamen. Can I remove a leaf, insert it into the soil and expect it will root, as would an African violet’s?”

Florist Cyclamen (Cyclamen persicum) is a delightful indoor plant that flowers during the winter months. Its quarter-sized blooms in red, pink and white are unique in that the petals are bent back, reflexed even, and held above pretty, heart-shaped, silver-margined leaves. There are varying types available with fancy flowers and intricately patterned foliage.

The cyclamen plant is tuberous and unfortunately is best propagated by seed or by division of its fibrous roots.

Usually this task is left to the experts who are best able to deal with erratic germination and roots susceptible to rot.

Recently I became the proud owner of my very first cyclamen (thanks, Mom!). It’s always fun to get to learn about the life cycle of a new plant. With the cylumen’s bloom time during the winter, it has a period of dormancy mid spring through the end of summer when it’s leaves will yellow and shed, and it will demand next to no water. This time frame is opposite of what we are used to with our perennial flowers that bloom during the summer and go dormant during the winter. In late August, begin watering and leaves will sprout anew before blooming begins during the fall.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. One of Noah's sons

5. Openings

11. Rising from the dead

14. Expressions for humorous effect

15. North American country

18. Flowed over

19. Tags

21. Long-lasting light bulb

23. Off-Broadway theater award

24. Khoikhoi peoples

28. Beloved movie pig

29. South Dakota

30. Tai language

32. Get free of

33. Afflict

35. Transmits genetic information from DNA

36. Commercials

39. Digits

41. Expression of sympathy

42. Bleats

44. Swiss Nobel Peace Prize winner

46. Vegetable

47. Turf

49. Disorganized in character

52. Takes

56. Rules over

58. More fervid

60. Sweet drink

62. Cry loudly

63. A friendly nation

CLUES DOWN

1. A title of respect in India

2. His and ____

3. Employee stock ownership plan

4. A type of bond

(abbr.)

5. Acting as if you are

6. Affirmative

7. Not caps

8. Type of medication

9. Monetary unit

10. Private school in New York

12. Small stream

13. A person of wealth

16. Exclude

17. Someone who vouches for you

20. Vegetable part

22. Gov't lawyer

25. Term to address a woman

26. Swiss river

27. About senator

29. ____ Paulo, city

31. Native American tribe

34. "Titanic" actor

36. Campaign for students' rights

(abbr.)

37. Capital of Senegal

38. Slang for military leader

40. Football's big game

43. Women who threw themselves on funeral pyres

45. Equally

48. Forest animal

50. Heavy stoves

51. Releasing hormone (abbr.)

53. Song

54. Type of pickle

55. Offer in return for money

57. Soviet Socialist Republic

58. Burns wood (abbr.)

59. Beloved singer Charles

61. Three-toed sloth

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 9

In addition, the College will provide a pathway for Holyoke Public Schools employees, once enrolled, to earn additional credits for their degree program through the College's prior learning assessment portfolio program.

BusinessWest now accepting nominations for 40 Under Forty Class of 2020

The selected individuals will be profiled in the May 12 edition of *BusinessWest*.



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Sunday Brunch 11:30am-2:30pm

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Anacelis Flecha, CNM

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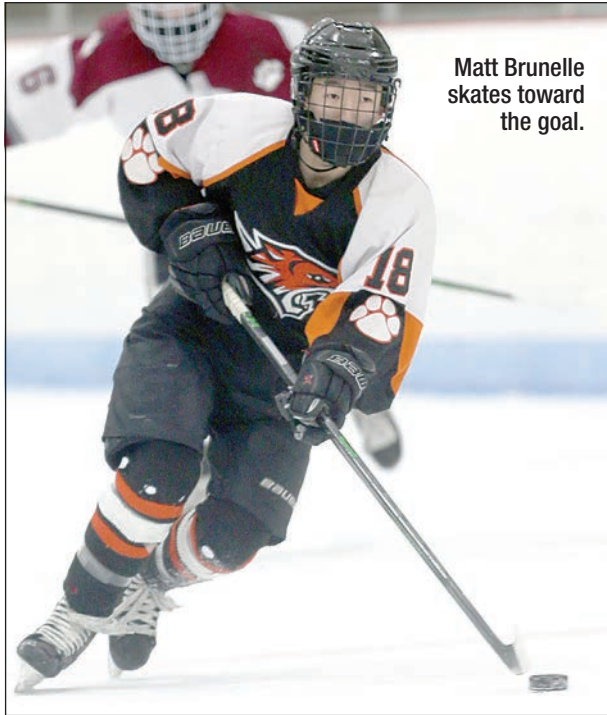


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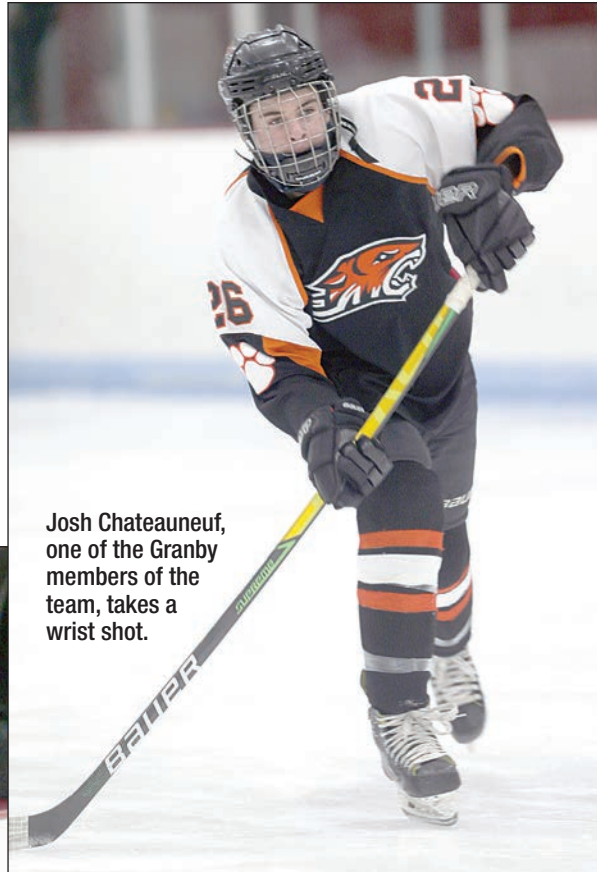
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Matt Brunelle skates toward the goal.



Josh Chateaufneuf, one of the Granby members of the team, takes a wrist shot.



Kadyn Laramée shoots in traffic.



Joe Meon tries to pull the puck away from the wall.

Photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Tigers pick up pair of wins in late season

SOUTH HADLEY – After having its season reinstated by the school committee, the South Hadley High School ice hockey team, which co-ops with Granby High School, sprung into action and fit seven games into the final three weeks of the winter season. South Hadley played its home games in Holyoke at Fitzpatrick Rink. Holyoke was previously part of the program, but dropped out two years ago. Holyoke was unable to play high school sports during the winter season. After struggling to get the rust off in the first few games, South Hadley rebounded to finish 3-3-1, including two wins in their final three games.

More racers gearing up for modified series

SEEKONK – When the Tri Track Open Modified Series season takes the green flag on May 1 at Monadnock Speedway, the field will be stacked full of talent. One of the talented stars is rising New Hampshire racer Matthew Kimball, who is a former Mini

Stock champion and currently a competitor in the Sportsman Modified division at multiple tracks in the Granite State.

Kimball, who does have limited starts with Tri Track, is hoping to be able to run the entire six-race slate in 2021. His most important goal will be to

be consistent, learn more about the Tour-Type Modifieds, and come home with solid top-10 finishes. He also plans to compete full-time at Monadnock in the Apex Racing No. 11 in the track's Sportsman Modifieds and hopes to chase the NASCAR Division I National Championship, if the first few weeks of the season go well.

"It's always good to try and get your name out there and this is a great opportunity to do that," Kimball said. "We want to win races, but we are going to go race-by-race, and see what the schedules look like, so we don't have conflicts. We're going to take this year step-by-step. We would like to finish top-10 in the Tri Track points."

Kimball, who won the Mini Stock title at Monadnock in



Matt Kimball is another hopeful to win the Tri Track this year. Submitted photo

See **RACERS**, page 8

Wrestling still not cleared for competitions as spring looms

By **Gregory A. Scibelli**
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – In an effort to fit every sport into the modified high school seasons, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association decided to move wrestling from the winter to the spring season. With football occurring during the Fall 2 season, it was decided wrestling should take place during the spring.

However, at a recent meeting of MIAA Wrestling Committee, it was announced the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs had still not cleared the sport of wrestling for Level 3 activity, which allows for competitions to occur. If wrestling

is not allowed to have level 3 activity, meets cannot occur.

In the meeting, it was reported that football will be observed during the next three weeks. Due to the close contact involved in football, the EEA will be looking at the sport to compare it to the close contact that will occur in wrestling. Spring sports are set to begin in late April, early May.

According to the minute of the committee meeting, if the EEA makes the decision to move wrestling into the level 3 status, then modifications for the sport will be presented for approval by the MIAA.

In addition to observa-

See **WRESTLING**, page 8

Valley Blue Sox name new general manager

HOLYOKE – Valley Blue Sox President Fred Ciaglo announced the hiring of Kate Avard as the team’s new General Manager.

Avard, 22, will be returning to the Blue Sox organization after interning with the team during the 2016 season. The Easthampton, MA native, originally from Holyoke, is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst where she earned a B.S. degree in Sport Management from the Isenberg School of Management and a B.S. degree studying kinesiology from the School

of Public Health and Health Sciences.

“We’re very excited to appoint Kate as our new General Manager,” said Ciaglo. “Having previously served as one of our interns, she knows the culture and community-oriented mission of our organization. Given her education in sport management, Kate will bring strong business fundamentals, creativity and a passion for baseball to the Blue Sox front office.”

While at UMass Amherst, Avard served as the Intramural Special Events Assistant and held multiple intern-

ships within the Athletic Department. After graduating from UMass Amherst, Avard enrolled in graduate courses studying athletic training and emergency medicine at Boston University.

Avard is eager to return to MacKenzie Stadium and expand her role with the organization.

“Growing up in Holyoke, I attended many Holyoke Giants games, then later Blue Sox games, with my family which is where I fell in love with the sport of baseball,” said Avard. I later interned with the team and saw first-

hand the positive influence the team had on the local families and local community, similar to what I had personally experienced growing up,” she added.

“The Blue Sox reputation has grown tremendously over the past few years, making the team a staple throughout Western Mass, said Avard. “Stepping into the role of General Manager, I hope I am able to build upon the relationship the organization has with the community and grow the team in the coming years.”

25 nominees for Volleyball Hall of Fame announced

HOLYOKE – The list of 25 nominees for the International Volleyball Hall of Fame 2021 Induction has been announced and the Fan Vote presented by Mizuno is now officially open through Feb. 28.

Fans can vote daily for as many nominees as they feel are deserving of Induction. The top 5 nominees selected by the public will comprise a “fans’ ballot” that will be tallied along with the official selection committee ballots to pick the Class of 2021 inductees.

“These 25 nominees represent 11 different countries and some of the biggest names in volleyball from the past two decades and beyond,” said George Mulry, Executive Director of the International Volleyball Hall of Fame. “Having to skip the 2020 class of Inductees because of COVID has created a bit of a backlog that’s resulted in perhaps the strongest list of nominees top to bottom we’ve ever had. I think it’s going to be really hard for people to

narrow down their Fan Vote selections but it will also make this year’s Induction that much more special for the selected class.”

The new class of Inductees will be announced in March and the 2021 Induction Celebration is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 23 and will be live streamed for anyone that cannot travel to Holyoke. Induction Celebration tickets will go on sale when the new class is announced.

The nominees are: Taismary Agüero, Dr. Rolf Andresen, Manuela Benelli, Gianfranco Briani, Julius Brink and Jonas Reckermann, Dr. Gabriel Cherebetiu, Sergio Dutra Santos, Giovane Gavio, Linda Hanley, Barbara Jelic-Ruzic, Pieter Joon, Siegfried Kohler, Peter Lange, Andre Meyer, Samuele Papi, Carmelo Pittera, Bernardo Rezende, Todd Rogers, Yumilka Ruiz, Ricardo Santos, Clay Stanley, Sergey Tetyukhin, Logan Tom, Fernanda Venturini, and Elaine Youngs.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

REGION – Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching “turleysports.” Please follow and share. We will be featuring photos

from all 11 of our sports sections in the coming weeks, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

Hampshire association seeking umpires

REGION – The Hampshire Franklin Baseball Umpire Association (HFBUA) is planning to conduct classes for the 2021 baseball season following all recommended COVID-19 protocols including the possibility of on-line instruction. The association covers umpiring of scholastic baseball for all of Hampshire

and Franklin county schools registered under MIAA and several other baseball leagues in the area. If you are interested in umpiring baseball or obtaining further information regarding the upcoming classes please contact Roger Booth - Secretary/Treasurer of the HFBUA via email at quilthunter@comcast.net.

Sign-ups now available for Relics softball

LUDLOW – The Western Mass Relics has opened registration for the 2021 Senior Softball Season.

The Silver Division (age 50 to 64) has filled 36 of the 112 spots and the Gold Division (65-and-up) has filled

32 of the 96 spots. The registrations are accepted on a first come first serve basis. All our games are played at the Fish & Game in Ludlow.

For further information or to register go to <http://www.westernmassrelics.org>.

***RACERS**, from page 7*

2018, started his career in go-karts, and moved to the Mini Stocks at the age of 13. From there, he sat behind the wheel of a modified at full speed for the first time at age 15, and the experience was different from anything he had dealt with before -- but he found success quickly.

“My dad had a few championships before I took over and it didn’t take me too long to adapt to it,” Kimball said. “I won my first race just four weeks into the season. I practiced a lot before getting into a race -- ran it towards the end of the year, and during practices, we went out as much as possible. Once you get comfortable in the car, it’s like driving any other race car.”

Kimball competes regularly at Monadnock, Hudson Speedway, Claremont Speedway and occasionally Lee USA Speedway, and plans to focus on Monadnock full-time this season, along with Tri Track. Driving the No. 50 machine, Kimball has learned the ropes of the Modified over the last few years,

but knows he needs to continue to soak up the environment to be successful at the level of Tri Track competition. He finished sixth and seventh in the two Tri Track races on Monadnock’s high-banks last year.

“It’s a pretty big difference racing-wise from a Mini Stock to a Modified, but it just takes a few laps to get used to the throttle and the power,” Kimball said. “The biggest difference is the tone of the race. It’s a lot different trying to save your tires, versus a crate car, where you go hard the whole time. I still have to figure it out. I have to figure out adjustments to make it last more than 80 laps, so we are there at the end. A lot of it is experience -- you don’t really see many guys jump in a tour car and just be there at the end.”

He’s excited to continue to race with the talented field Tri Track offers, and is looking forward to visiting Seekonk Speedway for the first time in his career. Tri Track’s 2021 schedule includes two stops at Monadnock, his home-track, two at Seekonk and two at Star Speedway, where Kimball has limited laps.

“It’s a lot different racing against the big names, but they were in the same shoes we were at one point in their career,” Kimball said. “I’ve never even been to Seekonk, so that will be tough. But I feel confident in Monadnock and I’ve won at Star in the Mini Stock. The difference at Star with a car with a lot more power will require a different line and everything. It should be a lot of figuring out different setups this year.”

With support from his family and friends, and his sponsors, Kimball wouldn’t be able to drive on the track. His sponsors include APEX Racing, KRJ Jewelry, Edmunds Ace Hardware, Peterboro Tools, Tyler’s Small Engines, Trends of Fashion, Birch Wood Inn, Beangroup and more. He’s lucky to have a stout list of supports behind him to help him compete at a high-level.

“I’m just going to be playing it by ear and get the cars ready and go for Monadnock, I’ll be running three races in that same weekend,” Kimball said. “Between the two Sportsman Modified races and the Tri Track race, it will be a busy weekend. I’m also going to be able

to race my dad, who will run our family car in a few races this year. I’ve beaten him three times, and he’s beaten me once, so hopefully I can keep the good streak going. I’m just hoping to be there at the end of each race this year.”

Kimball is just one of more than 15 drivers who have already registered to compete in the entire Tri Track slate for the 2021 season. Registration is open and teams can register at TriTrackModifieds.com/team-info. Teams have the option to either sign-up for the whole season or just one single race.

The Tri Track Open Modified Series will visit three historic New England tracks, twice each, to make up the six-race schedule for 2021. The series will stop at Monadnock Speedway in Winchester, New Hampshire on May 1 and August 14, while visiting Star Speedway in Epping, New Hampshire on May 22 and July 24. The anticipated return to Seekonk Speedway, scheduled for June 30 and October 23, will mark two staple events -- the \$10,000 to win Open Wheel Wednesday in June and the Haunted Hundred to wrap the season.

***MORSE**, from page 1*

be open position, and the resignation of the mayor is a topic that will be discussed by the Holyoke City Council for a solution until a new motor is elected.

Though Morse is switching career

paths he shows affection and appreciation for Holyoke, his hometown and a city that he has helped to lead and transform. Especially during the unique battles of last year, perhaps it’s time for a new leader to help guide Holyoke through the coming years and new battles.

***WRESTLING**, from page 7*

tion of football, the status of vaccination in the Commonwealth will also play into the lifting of restrictions at the state

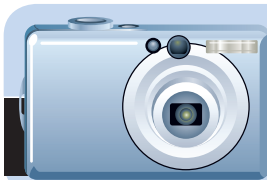
level. It was recently announced large sports venues like Fenway Park would be allowed to open beginning March 22 at 12 percent capacity as part of the beginning of Phase 4 of the state’s re-opening plan.

***SECURITY**, from page 4*

ions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social

Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadviser@amacfoundation.org.

Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor at AMAC.



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TheSun@turley.com

Attracting birds, butterflies, bees, and other beneficiaries

AMHERST – As we begin to think about planning our gardens this year, it’s a good time to consider the benefits of adding plants that attract birds, butterflies, and bees. Learn how to do just that by joining us for Attracting Birds, Butterflies, Bees, and Other Beneficials, a webinar to be hosted by the Jones Library via Zoom on Thursday, March 4 at 7 p.m.

This webinar, a power point presentation offered by naturalist and landscaper John Root, describes the essential roles played by birds, pollinators, and other beneficial wildlife and provides guidance on meeting their needs for food, cover, and water. A variety of plants that nourish these organisms throughout their lifecycles is discussed, and organic methods for establishing wildlife habitat are also

presented. Handouts will be available for downloading, and comments and questions will be welcome at the conclusion of the program. A recording of this event will be scheduled for multiple broadcasts by Amherst Media and will be made accessible at their website via YouTube.

For more information on the program and how to join us via Zoom, please visit <https://www.joneslibrary.org/> or contact Janet Ryan at ryanj@joneslibrary.org. The Zoom event can also be accessed directly on March 4 at <https://www.joneslibrary.org/beneficials>.

This program is made possible by the Friends of the Jones Libraries. This program is also supported in part by the Amherst Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

St. Patrick’s Road Race going virtual for 2021

HOLYOKE – If you haven’t heard by now, for the second year in a row, the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day Road Race has been cancelled due to concerns surrounding COVID-19.

We certainly didn’t come to this decision lightly but in the interest of our participants, volunteers, and our community we have cancelled this year’s in person race. We’ve been looking forward to the race since the cancellation last year, never thinking this pandemic would last this long.

We understand that this isn’t a replacement for the real thing but running with 7,000 others right now is not possible, but we will try to make it just as fun! This March we will hold the second Virtual Holyoke St Patrick’s

Day Road Race. Create your own 10K route (or use ours!) and compete against other runners. We will provide a familiar looking t-shirt, printable custom bib number, free beer, and local giveaways.

Go to <http://racewire.com/register.php?id=11824> for all the details to register.

Lastly, thank you for your patience and support over the last year. The St. Patrick’s Committee of Holyoke works tirelessly year-round to make this “Homecoming Weekend” the best one of the year. We look forward to the opportunity to host you on the streets of Holyoke for the 45th running of the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Road Race in March 2022.

Public Notices

RECEIVER’S NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue of an Order for Appointment of Receiver issued by the Western Division Housing Court in the case entitled “City of Holyoke v. Estate of Robert Ezold, et als”, Docket No. 17-CV-1036 dated March 16, 2018, recorded with the Hampden District Registry of Deeds in Book 22177, Page 377, Order Replacing Receiver dated June 26, 2019, recorded in Book 23652, Page 497; and pursuant to an Order on February 19, 2021, Authorizing Enforcement of Receiver’s Priority Lien under M.G.L. Ch. 111 §127I, the Receiver, Block Capital, LLC, hereby gives notice of its intent to foreclose on its Lien regarding the premises located at 57 Norwood Terrace, Holyoke, Massachusetts on **March 29, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.** at the premises. The premises are described as follows:

A certain parcel of land with the buildings thereon situated in said Holyoke, known and designated as Lot Number Twelve (12) on a Plan of Lots of Norwood Terrace Extension, and recorded in Hampden County Registry of Deeds, Book of Plans “Z” Page 35.

Said Lot is more particularly bounded and described as follows:

EASTERLY by Norwood Terrace sixty (60) feet;

SOUTHERLY by Lot #11 on said Plan, one hundred twenty-three and fifty-two one hundredths (123.52) feet;

WESTERLY by land of owners unknown, sixty (60) feet; and

NORTHERLY by Hicks Avenue, one hundred twenty-three and fifty-two one hundredths (123.52) feet.

Being the same premises

conveyed to Robert J. Ezold and Ellen Moriarty Ezold by deed recorded with Hampden District Registry of Deeds in Book 3922, Page 87.

The Receiver reserves the right to postpone the sale to a later date by public proclamation at the time and date appointed for the sale and to further postpone at any adjourned sale date by public proclamation at the time and date appointed for the adjourned sale date. The Receiver further reserves the right to open the bidding at the time, date and place appointed for sale, and if no bids are received, or the bids received are deemed unacceptable to Receiver, to postpone the sale to a later date by public proclamation.

In the event that the successful bidder at the foreclosure sale shall default in purchasing the within described property according to the terms of this Notice of Sale and/or the terms of the Memorandum of Sale executed at the time of the foreclosure, the Receiver reserves the right to sell the property by Receiver’s Foreclosure Deed to the second highest bidder provided that the second highest bidder shall deposit with Receiver’s attorneys the amount of the required deposit as set forth herein within three (3) business days after written notice of default of the previous highest bidder and title shall be conveyed to said second highest bidder within twenty (20) days of said written notice.

The premises will be sold subject to any and all unpaid taxes and other municipal assessments and liens, and subject to prior liens or other enforceable encumbrances of record entitled to precedence over the Receiver’s lien, and

subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, reservations and conditions of record and subject to all tenancies and/or rights of parties in possession.

Terms of the Sale: Cash, cashier’s or certified check in the sum of \$10,000.00 as a deposit must be shown at the time and place in order to qualify as a bidder (the Receiver and its designee(s) are exempt from this requirement); high bidder to sign Memorandum of Sale upon acceptance of bid; balance of purchase price payable in cash or by certified check in thirty (30) days from the date of that sale at the offices of the Receiver’s attorney: Murphy & Lupan, P.A., 5 Commonwealth Road, 4th Floor, Natick, MA 01760, or such other time as may be designated by the Receiver. The description of the premises contained in the Deed to Robert J. Ezold and Ellen Moriarty Ezold recorded with Hampden District Registry of Deeds in Book 3922, Page 87 shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication. Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Block Capital, LLC, Receiver By its Attorney:

Michael J. Murphy, Esq.
Murphy & Lupan, P.A.
5 Commonwealth Road, 4th Floor
Natick, MA 01760
(508) 650-9252
02/26, 03/05, 03/12/2021

LEGAL NOTICE CITY OF HOLYOKE GAS & ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT ELECTRICAL SERVICES ANNUAL CONTRACT

Sealed bids for the above contract will be received by Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept. until **2:00 p.m., March 25, 2021** at the Office of the

Manager, 99 Suffolk St., Holyoke, MA 01040, at which time proposals will be publicly opened and read.

Bid Deposit
A Bid Deposit in the amount of \$25,000 must accompany all bids and may be in the form of a certified, treasurer’s, or cashier’s check payable to HG&E from a responsible bank or trust company; cash; or a bid bond from a licensed surety payable to HG&E.

Prevailing Wage Rates: Rates, which are to apply to the work, are set by the Mass. Dept. of Labor & Industries.

DCAMM
A Certificate of Eligibility from the Mass. Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance and an Update Statement are required.

Additional information may be obtained from:

Chi Wong
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept.
99 Suffolk St.
Holyoke, MA 01040
(413) 536-9308
cwong@hged.com

The right is hereby reserved to reject any or all proposals, or to accept any proposal that in the opinion of the Manager may be in the best interest of the City of Holyoke.

Please mark sealed envelopes **“Bid for Electrical Services Annual Contract”** and address them to:

James M. Lavelle, Manager
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept.
99 Suffolk St.
Holyoke, MA 01040
03/05/2021

**Tighe&Bond
H0052-044/03/02/21 00100-1
Advertisement for Bids
HOLYOKE WATER WORKS
HOLYOKE,
MASSACHUSETTS
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS**
Sealed Bids for the construction of the **“West Holyoke**

Water Storage Tank” will be received by the Holyoke Water Works at 20 Commercial Street, Holyoke MA 01040 until **1:00 p.m. local time on April 14, 2021.** The Bid Opening will follow on April 14, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. at the Holyoke Water Treatment Plant at 600 Westfield Rod, Holyoke MA, at which time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read. Sealed Bids must have outer envelope marked as **“West Holyoke Water Storage Tank.”**

The work consists of the construction of a new 500,000-gallon pre-stressed concrete drinking water storage tank, asphalt access road, electrical work, installation of a new water main to connect the tank to the existing water main, valve vaults, associated site work, and modifications to an existing 500,000-gallon steel tank located at the site. Bids shall be on a lump sum and unit price basis, with additive alternate bid items as indicated in the Bid Form.

All Bids for this project are subject to the provisions of Massachusetts General Chapter 30, Section 39M as amended.

Bidding Documents may be obtained electronically from the Tighe & Bond website at:

http://www.tighebond.com/Projects_Out_to_Bid.php

Prospective bidders must complete a one-time registration process on the web site in order to receive log-in credentials. Bidders must log in to the web site to download bidding documents for the project.

Bidders will be added to the “planholders” or prospective bidders list upon downloading the bidding documents for the project. Bidding documents may also be examined at the office of Tighe & Bond, Inc., 53

Southampton Road, Westfield, Massachusetts between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, legal holidays excluded.

A bid deposit shall be furnished in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders.

The time period for holding Bids is 30 days, Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays excluded, after opening of Bids.

This Contract contains price adjustments for hot mix asphalt mixes, diesel fuel, gasoline, and Portland cement contained in concrete, and steel. See Section 01290 for payment procedures and base prices for this Project.

Minimum Wage Rates as determined by the Commissioner of Department of Workforce Development under the provision of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 149, Section 26 to 27D, as amended, apply to this project. It is the responsibility of the Contractor, before Bid opening, to request if necessary, any additional information on Minimum Wage Rates for those trades people who may be employed for the proposed Work under this Contract.

A mandatory pre-Bid conference will be held at the site located on Apremont Highway in Holyoke, MA near the corner of Apremont Highway and Westfield Road (State Route 202) on **Tuesday March 16, 2021 at 10:00 am.**

HOLYOKE WATER WORKS, HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS

Consulting Engineer:
Tighe & Bond, Inc.
53 Southampton Road
Westfield, MA 01085
413-562-1600

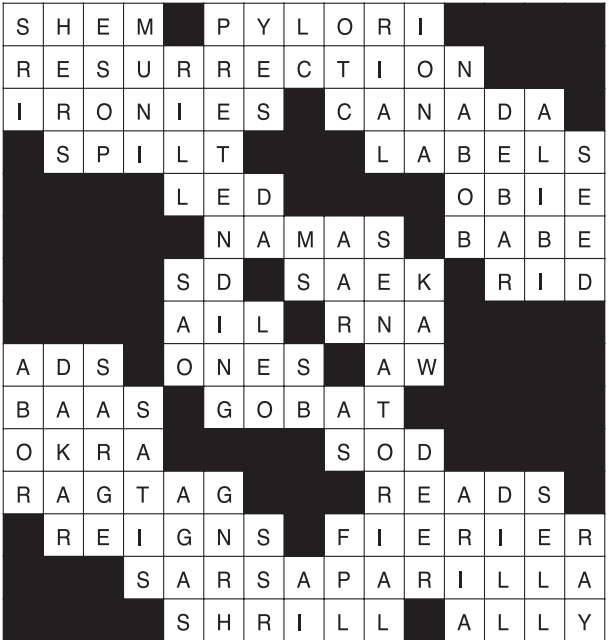
03/05/2021

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts’ public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon,
Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



The Sun OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$120, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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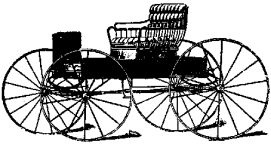
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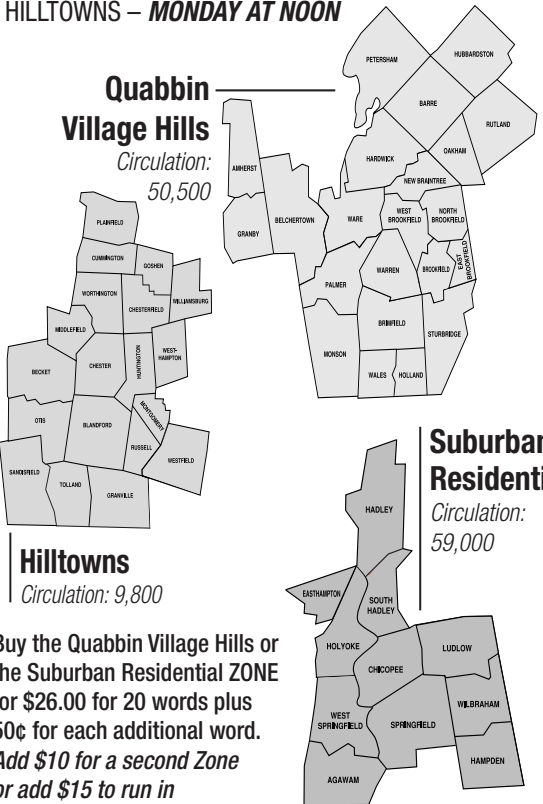
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ANSWERS, from page 1

rising contribution costs over the last several years, hope they'll get some of those funds back if the retirement board can't show proper documentation.

"One of the key questions has to do with those invoices that amount to well over \$200,000, for which there doesn't seem to be any backup material," said Hampden Town Administrator Robert Markel of the audit report during the March 1 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. "That money might somehow be repaid, or at least we should have a decision to go after it."

On March 1, Hampden Board of Selectmen Chair Donald Davenport identified another issue with the retirement board's representation that he did not approve of.

"I think it's important to note that you really have what I call 'The Agawam Crony Cabal,'" Davenport said. "You have Mr. (Richard) Theroux, who is the former Agawam town clerk; you have Karl Schmaelzle, who is a Agawam retired firefighter; and you have the Agawam Town Treasurer/Collector, Laurel Placzek. You have three of the five [board] members from Agawam, the [retirement board] office is Agawam, and their counsel is also the town counsel for Agawam."

Davenport suggested contacting a state representative or senator to request that a bill be filed to require all five board members to come from different communities. Davenport's Agawam-centric inquiry is among many that remain unanswered.

On March 3, Markel was scheduled

to lead a teleconference with the retirement board that included town managers, administrators and other officials from Hampden County communities, including Wilbraham Town Administrator Nick Breault.

During the call, which wasn't open to the public, Markel expected to "go through the issues one by one and see what their response is and basically say that things must change."

Breault said they'd be asking several questions and requesting documents from the retirement board.

"We're very keen to hear what the retirement board has to say," Breault said during Monday night's Wilbraham Board of Selectmen meeting.

There were more than a handful of monetary irregularities reported in the multi-year audit released last month by Ferax Treuhand AG. Close to \$234,000 of taxpayer and state employee money was spent on 119 false invoices for services never rendered, reviewed or documented.

After violating procedure and making multiple attorneys members of the system, the board paid the two individuals a total of \$179,266 in legal fees and \$448,210 in premiums. While most communities use employee money to pay 50% of premiums, municipal employees paid 90% of the fees of attorneys associated with the retirement board.

Three retirement board members also spent a total of \$10,936 on travel, lodging, recreation and entertainment. On a trip to Cape Cod, Chairperson Richard Theroux allotted \$1,825 to lodging, all while staying in his own condo; Theroux repaid the funds last week fol-

lowing the audit's release.

Multiple board members additionally earned thousands of dollars in social security despite a Massachusetts statute that prohibits public employees from collecting social security.

On Monday, prior to the March 3 call with the retirement board, Markel spoke with numerous town administrators and managers from the county, all who have witnessed tax spikes as a result of the retirement board's malfeasance.

"Today, we had participation from the far western end of Hampden County, the administrator in Chester. From the far eastern end, we had the administrator from Wales," said Markel.

Upon its release, the audit was immediately given to state Attorney General Maura Healey, the Mass. State Ethics Commission and Inspector General Glenn A. Cunha.

Optimism exists that each member of the retirement board will be forced to vacate his or her seat. At the very least, Davenport believes Theroux must step down immediately.

"You can't have someone in office who's going to be currently under three investigations. He'll be the principal of three investigations, as well as some of the board members. I think the towns really have to push for his resignation or for him to at least step aside."

As a result of the misappropriated funds, 35 Hampden County communities must now pay at least 8% more on each assessment until 2036. In Hampden, the assessment increased from \$603,000 to \$706,000 for 2021, totaling an additional \$103,000 this year over last.

"The increases have never been this sizeable; over the past couple of years, they've really been out of control," said Selectman John Flynn on March 1.

With multiple investigations under way and dozens of communities affected, Markel acknowledged that the situation has "many moving parts."

Given the severity of the allegations, however, Markel believes that Hampden stands a fighting chance to reclaim some of its lost money if the retirement board is found to be at fault.

"The truth is that we do not have power to act. They have power to act in Boston," said Markel. "I think that if enough employees in the towns of Hampden County, as well as the selectmen and others who have to vote to raise taxes to pay retirement benefits and assessments make it clear that it's unacceptable, I think public opinion can bring change."

The demand for change must extend beyond public office. If retirement board members are to resign, enabling a new board to take shape and communities to receive potential compensation, residents must force the action.

One article or television broadcast at a time, answers will be attained and justice made plausible, Markel said.

"The press is also important with getting the message out," said Markel. "It's fairly complicated. The way it operates is not easily understood so I think there's been less interest over the years in doing stories about their operations. If there's enough concern shown throughout the county, I have a sense that things can change."



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In The News

Fundraiser being held in honor of Flynn

AGAWAM – Even with the pandemic, the fond memories of deceased Agawam Water Department foreman Jim Flynn are able to live on, with a grave side remembrance and an on-line Dakin Humane Society fund raiser, furthering his love of animals.

On Oct. 30, the fifth anniversary of Flynn’s sudden passing, two dozen friends and his beloved Golden Retriever ‘Jameson’, met at his grave for a somber, snowy, masked, socially distanced, tribute and blessing. After his passing, the Piccin family, great friends of Jim and Jameson, welcomed Jameson into their loving home, where he has been a member of their family since.

With the pandemic and a desire to avoid “sharing much more than pizza and memories”, Flynn’s family and friends did not hold their annual, in person, early February, ‘Flynnner’s Birthday Party’ at the Italian Sporting Club, instead hosting a Dakin Humane Society on-line fund-raising event. To date, it has raised over \$2,000, when combined with the donations from the previous five annual ‘Flynnner’s Birthday Parties’, over \$7,000 has been raised for Dakin Humane Society in his memory. Organizers are hoping to resume the annual, in person, Dakin fund raisers at the Italian Sporting Club on Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022.



Jim Flynn and his best friend on Crowe’s Pasture Beach on Cape Cod.



Jameson was Flynn’s beloved golden retriever.

Submitted photos

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